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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/444)*]

68/232. World Soil Day and International Year of Soils

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries, particularly paragraphs 1 to 10 of its annex on the agreed criteria for their proclamation, as well as paragraphs 13 and 14, stating that an international day or year should not be proclaimed before the basic arrangements for its organization and financing have been made,

Noting that soils constitute the foundation for agricultural development, essential ecosystem functions and food security and hence are key to sustaining life on Earth,

Recognizing that the sustainability of soils is key to addressing the pressures of a growing population and that recognition, advocacy and support for promoting sustainable management of soils can contribute to healthy soils and thus to a food-secure world and to stable and sustainably used ecosystems,

Recalling the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] Agenda 21,[2] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,[4] the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)[5] and

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

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the commitments made therein and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[6]

Recognizing the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability, and stressing that desertification, land degradation and drought are challenges of a global dimension and that they continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries,

Recognizing also the urgent need, at all levels, to raise awareness and to promote sustainability of the limited soil resources, using the best available scientific information and building on all dimensions of sustainable development,

Noting that World Soil Day and the International Year of Soils can contribute to raising awareness of desertification, land degradation and drought, in line with the objective of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[7]

Recognizing that, for these reasons, an international year and world day on the same issue on soil could exceptionally be proclaimed at the same time without constituting a precedent,

Recalling resolutions 4/2013 and 5/2013 adopted on 22 June 2013 by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its thirty-eighth session,[8]

1. *Decides* to designate 5 December as World Soil Day and to declare 2015 the International Year of Soils;

2. *Invites* all Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, non-governmental organizations and individuals, to observe the Day and the Year, as appropriate;

3. *Invites* Governments, relevant regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to make voluntary contributions for the observance of the Day and the Year;

4. *Invites* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, mindful of the provisions contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, to facilitate the implementation of the Day and the Year, in collaboration with Governments, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa[7] and other relevant regional and international organizations, civil society and the general public, and also invites the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to keep the General Assembly

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[6] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[8] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the Conference of FAO, Thirty-eighth Session, Rome, 15–22 June 2013* (C 2013/REP).

informed of the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including on the evaluation of the Day and the Year;

5. *Stresses* that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met from voluntary contributions, subject to the availability and provision of voluntary contributions;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States in order to encourage them to carry out activities to commemorate World Soil Day and the International Year of Soils.

71st plenary meeting
20 December 2013